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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 001730

NOFORN
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Classified By: Acting Political M/C David Kostelancik. Reasons 1.4 (b) , (c), and (d).

[1](#)1. (S/NF) Summary: GOR officials and outside experts told us the Cuba-Russia relationship had not significantly changed since Raul Castro became President. There is no strong preference for Raul or Fidel Castro.

[1](#)2. (S/NF) The MFA's Cuba desk told us June 23, and outside experts subsequently confirmed, that Russia did not have a preference for working with either Raul or Fidel Castro. Russian Priorities: Cuba or Venezuela?

[1](#)4. (S/NF) Both MFA officials and outside experts declined to prioritize Russia's relations with Cuba and Venezuela. Russia has a longer history of relations with Cuba than with Venezuela.

[1](#)5. (S/NF) Leaders of Cuba and Venezuela have participated in high-profile visits with Russia officials, including President Medvedev. Palacio de la Libertad in Havana is the site of the Russian Consulate.

[1](#)6. (S/NF) Russia's bilateral trade with Venezuela totals more than USD 700 million, while trade with Cuba totals about USD 280 million. Davydov is the Russian Ambassador to Cuba. Russian Military Operations in Cuba

[1](#)7. (S/NF) GOR officials told us there were no plans to establish military bases in Cuba. They added that the GOR was unlikely to deploy any large military units to Cuba. Working with Cuban Officials

[1](#)8. (S/NF) When asked about their working relationship with their Cuban counterparts, GOR officials declined to comment. BEYRL